# State of Missouri School Crisis Response Plan
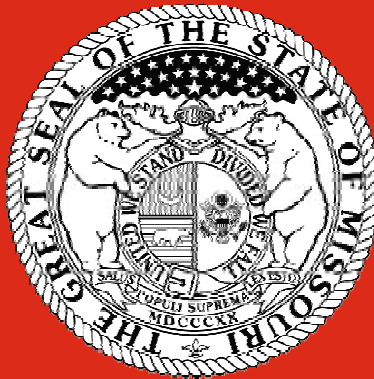
## A Workbook and Planning Guide for School and Community Leaders

September, 1999

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STATE OF MISSOURI
# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

August 30, 1999

The Honorable Mel Carnahan
Governor, State of Missouri
Missouri State Capitol – Room 216
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Re:     The Model School Crisis Response Plan

Dear Governor Carnahan:

It is with great pleasure we present you with the Model School Crisis Response Plan for the state of Missouri.

The plan was prepared with the expertise of individuals from the fields of education, law enforcement, crisis counseling, and school safety/security.  In addition, representatives from the Director's Office of the Department of Public Safety, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Fire Safety, State Emergency Management Agency, Department of Health and Missouri Center for Safe Schools served on the committee.

This plan will provide communities the tools to work in collaboration in developing a thorough crisis response plan.  The plan emphasizes collaboration while explaining the importance of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.  We would like to thank and commend your foresight in understanding the need for such a plan.

We hope that this plan meets with your approval.  Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Gary B. Kempker, Director
Department of Public Safety

Robert E. Bartman, Commissioner
Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education

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# *INTRODUCTION*

In January 1999, Governor Mel Carnahan directed the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Public Safety to develop a "model school disaster plan." This handbook is the result of that directive. Mr. Gary Kempker, director of the Department of Public Safety, and his staff took the lead in convening an advisory committee of state and local officials to assist with the preparation of this guide. Members of this committee are listed in the Acknowledgments section.

Although this project was prompted by the recent series of incidents at schools across the nation, we believe it is far more likely that schools will experience emergencies triggered by natural causes (tornado, fire, earthquake, etc.). Effective preparation and planning for these type of events, however, will help school officials, parents, students, and community leaders respond quickly and effectively to "unnatural" disasters such as violent, criminal activities.

There are more than 2,000 public schools in Missouri. Because the schools and their communities are so varied, the planning committee quickly determined that it would be impossible to create a "model plan" that would be suitable for every community or every possible emergency. As a result, we adopted a "workbook" approach that requires local planning teams to address the countless questions and contingencies that must be considered in developing disaster-response plans appropriate to local circumstances.

We believe that Missouri schools are safe. In fact, schools are probably the safest place for children to be on any given day. Nevertheless, the rash of incidents in schools has focused public attention on the importance of security and the fact that a crisis can occur anytime, anywhere. A crisis at a school can be devastating for the entire community, so it is extremely important that community leaders and stakeholders – not just educators and law enforcement – participate in the advance planning and development of comprehensive safety plans.

There is common saying in the military that "failing to prepare is preparing to fail." Maintaining the safety of Missouri children, school personnel and the school themselves must be a shared responsibility, and we must not fail to prepare for crisis situations. We hope this planning guide will be a practical and thought-provoking tool for educators, parents, emergency-service professionals, and community leaders throughout Missouri.

# PHASES OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Before you begin the process of working with stakeholders to develop a formal safety plan or crisis-response plan, it is important to understand the basic elements of emergency management. A clear understanding of each phase will help your team ensure that the plan is as thorough and effective as possible.  The four phases of emergency management are:

1. Mitigation
2. Preparedness
3. Response
4. Recovery

**Mitigation:**   Actions taken to eliminate or reduce the degree of long-term risk to life and property from natural, technological or manmade hazards.  The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines mitigation as "acting before a disaster strikes . . . to reduce the effects of the disaster when it occurs."   Some of the effects of mitigation are saving lives and reducing property loss, reducing social dislocation and stress, reducing economic losses, and reducing legal liabilities.

**Preparedness:**   Actions taken in advance to develop operational capabilities and facilitate effective response when an emergency occurs.  These steps may include: creating emergency warning systems; revising and updating current emergency-operations plans; establishing mutual aid agreements with other agencies; and providing training and information for students, staff, parents and school patrons about emergency policies and procedures and their roles in the plan.

**Response:**   Actions taken immediately before, during or after an emergency to save lives, minimize damage and enhance the effectiveness of recovery.  Examples of response activities include:   activating warning systems; providing medical assistance; staffing the emergency operations center or command post; evacuating students and staff or "sheltering in place"; and providing reception and care for the students and personnel.

**Recovery:**   Activities to return vital life support systems to minimum operating standards and long-term measures designed to return facilities, programs and operations to normal or improved levels.  Recovery measures may include:  providing crisis counseling for students and personnel; conducting damage assessment and clearing debris; providing information and recovery reports to the public; and reassessing the crisis response plan.

Understanding each of these phases will help you formulate better plans.  For example, if you fail to recognize or anticipate potential hazards (mitigation phase), unnecessary injuries may occur during an actual emergency.

# A CASE STUDY:  TORNADO WARNING

The importance of the four-phase emergency-management process can be illustrated most effectively by putting it into a "real life" context.  For the following example, we will use a tornado warning that occurs during the school day.

**Mitigation Phase**
Actions taken in advance to reduce threats to life and property.

1. Ensure that the designated storm shelter or shelter areas are structurally adequate and large enough to accommodate students and faculty.  Make sure that potentially dangerous materials (cleaning chemicals, for example) are not stored in the shelter area.
2. Secure objects and furnishings (supplies and equipment, bookshelves, freestanding cabinets, etc.) so that they cannot become airborne or tip over in a storm.
3. Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio with battery backup.
4. Review the school safety checklist.

**Preparedness Phase**
Actions taken in advance to develop operational capabilities and facilitate effective response when an emergency occurs.

1. Educate students and staff (through classroom instruction and drill) on what to do in the event of a tornado.  This will include listening to instructions and proceeding to designated shelters from different parts of the building.
2. Determine how students with special needs will be assisted to the shelter, and practice these procedures.
3. Prepare a school emergency kit.
4. Define the role and authority of the person or persons responsible for monitoring the NOAA Weather Radio (or other communication system) and activating the school's alarm system.
5. Provide first aid training for selected personnel.
6. Notify parents in advance about tornado-alert procedures and how/when/where students will be released from school.
7. Make sure local emergency-response agencies know the designated shelter areas in the building.  This is essential in the event of a partial or total building collapse.
8. Place flashlights in strategic locations and make sure that personnel know where they are located.
9. Designate an off-site evacuation point in case the building is severely damaged or becomes unsafe.
10. Establish clear procedures and duties for securing vital student records and other essential materials.

**Response Phase**
Actions taken immediately before, during or after an emergency to save lives, minimize damage and enhance the effectiveness of recovery.

1.    Activate the school's tornado-warning system.
2.    Teachers take grade books/class rosters with them to the shelter.
3.    Students are led to designated shelter area.
4.    In the storm shelter students assume position for protection from flying objects.
5.    While in the shelter, staff continues monitoring radio for weather updates.
6.    If injuries occur, personnel with first aid training render assistance.
7.    Students and staff remain in shelter until the "all-clear" is given.

**Recovery**
Activities to return vital life support systems to minimum operating standards and long-term activity designed to return life to normal or improved levels.

1.    If the storm passes without causing damage, normal activities resume.  This should not be done until the building and grounds have been checked for downed power lines, broken glass, etc.  Students and staff may need to be reassured the situation is safe.  Whether the tornado strikes or not, students may need counseling to calm their fears.
2.    The school principal or other authorized person notifies the district office and reports on the status of the school.
3.    News media are advised of the school's status.  This should be coordinated with the district office, but other action may be taken in the event of injuries.

**If the building is struck by a tornado:**
1.    The school has worked with emergency response agencies to determine how students will be released to their parents.
2.    The school has made arrangements for crisis counseling for students and staff.
3.    A location has been designated (another school, church, community center, etc.) to resume classes if the building is heavily damaged.

This is only a brief example of how your planning team should approach the task of emergency management, and this scenario does *not* cover all the issues you would need to consider.  Every school and school district will have unique circumstances to consider.  For example, the location of your school (urban, suburban, rural) is likely to have a major influence on the emergency services that are readily available.  Therefore, each planning team must adapt the emergency-management process to its own situation, include outside stakeholders, and be prepared to explore all options and contingencies.

# THE COMMUNITY CRISIS TEAM

Before the development of any comprehensive safety plan or crisis-response plan, identify and include the many "stakeholders" in your community. Identify the individuals and groups with a vested interest in understanding the plan (or at least their part in the plan). Ask yourself what each stakeholder's role is (or should be) in developing and implementing an effective safety plan.

Including your community's many stakeholders does *not* mean that you have to sacrifice security. Every participant in the planning process does not have to know every aspect of your security plans, such as potential police tactics in a given situation. However, by including all the stakeholders in your advance planning and risk-assessment activities, you will be more likely to secure their expertise and assistance; establish cooperative relationships for the future, and increase the community's understanding of and support for the school's security-related policies and procedures.

Here is a basic list of the probable stakeholders in your community, along with some outside agencies that you may be able to contact for advice and assistance.

**The School Board**
The board of education has an obligation to understand the content of the overall safety plan and how it is supposed to function. The board also plays an important role in making sure that safety and security are priorities for each school and the district as a whole. If substantial resources are needed to implement new safety measures, only the board of education can authorize such expenditures. Any plan that does not have the support of the board is not likely to be implemented effectively.

**Law Enforcement**
In virtually any type of crisis where outside assistance is required, a law enforcement agency will be involved. Law enforcement may not be the primary agency in a given situation, but it is likely to be involved to some extent. A key role of the planning team is to determine which agency or agencies will be expected to handle different kinds of incidents at school. Depending on the location of your school, for example, what agencies can you call upon? City police? The sheriff's department? Highway Patrol? These questions need to be answered clearly in order to prevent confusion when an actual emergency occurs. Law enforcement personnel also can provide valuable training for staff on how to react to emergency situations and how to protect themselves.

**Fire Personnel**
In many situations (fire, gas leak, chemical spill, etc.), the fire department may be the primary agency involved in handling the incident. Utilize their expertise to train faculty/staff on how to respond to such events. In most cases, your team will probably want to work on joint plans that involve law enforcement and fire personnel. Again, this will help prevent confusion during an actual emergency.

**Emergency Medical Personnel**
The planning team must assess what kind of emergency medical services are available in the community or region, the capacity of those services, and how long it may take them to arrive on the scene when needed. Emergency medical personnel should coordinate closely with school, law enforcement and fire personnel. Develop relationships with emergency medical personnel by

asking them to advise/train school staff on emergency procedures and how to reduce/prevent injuries in various situations.

**Emergency Management Agencies**
These agencies (local, state and federal) have expertise in developing safety and disaster-response plans. Their assistance and expertise can be valuable assets to your planning team.

**The Media**
In the event of a crisis, confusion at the school and in the community are very real possibilities. The news media can play a vital role in disseminating facts to the community and preventing greater confusion. Provide clear guidelines to representatives of the local news media about the school's communication procedures and policies during different types of potential emergencies. Clearly identify your "chain of command" and who the school's spokespersons are likely to be in given situations. Work with the media to clarify policies related to confidential information about students and to establish procedures for providing bulletins to the community (where and when parents can pick up their children, for example).

**Faith Community**
In the event of a crisis, many individuals seek comfort in their religious faith. Priests, ministers and rabbis can be a tremendous resource in counseling students, faculty and parents. Church facilities also may be critical assets if school facilities are severely damaged by storm, fire or earthquake. Involve members of the local faith community in your planning.

**Public Utilities**
By communicating with the public utilities, the planning committee can gain a clear understanding of potential hazards and important precautions related to electric power, was and gas services. For example, if the safety team is developing an evacuation plan for an incident involving a gas leak at school, the utility company can advise where gas lines are located, so that students are not evacuated along these routes. This action alone can prevent confusion and potential injury.

**Funeral Directors**
If an emergency situation on school grounds results in the death of students, staff or citizens, it is important to have an understanding with local funeral directors about releasing information. It may be beneficial to know the capacity of local funeral homes. If your community does not have a funeral home, you may contact the state association for assistance in coordinating with the funeral directors in your area.

**School Staff**
School personnel will be the first line of response in any crisis. Obviously, they have a personal interest in understanding their roles in the school's safety plan, but they also have professional responsibilities for safeguarding students and ensuring that emergency-response measures are executed correctly. Key personnel who should be involved in advance safety planning include teachers, nurses, school secretaries, custodians, transportation staff, and counselors.

**Students**
Students often feel that their opinions "don't count." Students, however, play a critical role in maintaining school security, and they should have "ownership" in the safety plan. If student

representatives are included in the planning process, students will better understand the need for various security measures and will more readily follow procedures in the event of a crisis.

**Parents**
In the event of a crisis, parents naturally want to see their children as quickly as possible. By including parents in the planning process, you have the opportunity to create more-effective procedures for picking up children from school, releasing information, etc. Parent leaders also can play an important educational role for other parents in the community when they are informed about the different components of the overall safety plan.

**School Transportation**
Depending on the situation, students may have to be transported from a school building or from one part of the school district to another. Transportation managers, bus drivers and bus contractors must be involved in the planning process in order to anticipate potential transportation needs.

**Private Schools and Other Institutions**
An essential partner in a crisis could be the school located down the street or in another part of town. Evaluate the facilities that are available in your community – public schools, private schools, child care centers, community colleges, universities, and businesses. If a school building must be evacuated, these facilities may provide an ideal location for relocating students and staff. A forced evacuation may not occur on a warm, dry day. All of the schools in town (public and private) should have advance plans and agreements for assisting each other and sharing facilities in different types of emergency situations.

**Red Cross, Salvation Army and Other Volunteer Agencies**
Local agencies such as the Red Cross and Salvation Army can provide valuable expertise for your planning team, in addition to emergency services such as food and shelter.

**Missouri Center for Safe Schools**
The Missouri Center for Safe Schools, based at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, can be a valuable resource, especially in the prevention of violent behavior. The center has developed a survey to assist school officials in assessing safety needs. The center's staff also provides training for school personnel about the Safe Schools Act, discipline policies, and other topics. (816-235-5657)

**Victim Service Agencies**
In the event of a crisis of a violent nature, the students, teachers, school staff, parents, emergency response personnel, and others within the community may be vulnerable to the trauma caused by such an event. Care must be taken to help victims and survivors to cope with the pain and despair that may be the aftermath of the crisis. Victim service agencies have personnel who are trained in immediate crisis response and long-term stress reactions to trauma. The victim services personnel within your community can be of assistance in responding to the needs of the victims, witnesses, and survivors and need to be included in your planning process. (For more information on this area, please refer to Appendix IX.)

**Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**
State education officials have contact with school districts across the state and can provide ideas from other districts that may assist your planning team. It administers state-funded grants that can help school districts with security measures and alternative education programs. (573-751-4212)

**Missouri Department of Health**
The Department of Health can be a resource for such things as expertise in responding to particular health concerns.  (573-751-6400)

**Missouri Department of Mental Health**
This state agency can be source to turn to for counseling services and response planning.  State officials also can help you identify agencies and individuals in your community who can provide assistance.  (573-751-4122)

**Missouri Department of Natural Resources**
Incidents involving hazardous or toxic materials are a growing concern.  Would you know what action to take if a truck or train carrying hazardous material had an accident near your school?  The Department of Natural Resources can provide technical assistance and help with planning.  (573-751-4732)

**Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)**
Your Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) can be very helpful in the event of chemical spills.  Work with them in forming your response plan.

**City/County Health Department**
These officials can provide information and expertise in a variety of areas (sudden outbreak of infectious disease, water contamination, etc.), and they may play an important role in emergency response or recovery.

**City/County Government**
Coordinate with local government officials.  Many cities and counties have planners on staff who can be of assistance in forming your response plan.  In addition, they may be key players in the event of an emergency.

# THE SCHOOL (INTERNAL) CRISIS TEAM

In most cases, the school staff/faculty will be the first line of response in any emergency. There are basic duties that have to be completed in any type of crisis situation. After identifying these duties for different kinds of situations, then determine who can best handle those responsibilities.

Due to the varying size of schools, some personnel are likely to have multiple duties. Regardless of the type of incident, each school's internal response team needs to be prepared to handle the following functions and tasks:

**Risk Assessment**
The individual who performs this task will be charged with determining the risk that a particular event/incident poses to students and the school. For example, a fight between two students poses a different threat than a student who claims to have weapon. Often, the principal will be the person charged with making the risk assessment and authorizing various responses. However depending on the type of incident, this may not be possible. Many school personnel may be confronted with situations in which they must make immediate judgments and decisions about the nature of the threat and appropriate responses. The time it takes for a principal to get to the scene may make a critical difference.

**Record Keeper**
This duty includes ensuring that student rosters are obtained or information on a particular student is available. This is particularly important in the event of injuries and the need to notify parents. It is essential for teachers to have up-to-date rosters and attendance information for their own classes. Record-keeping duties often may be assigned to a school secretary, but alternate procedures may be needed. In today's environment, the security/accessibility of both paper and electronic records is an important issue. Your plans need to take this into account. For example, if there is a fire in the school office, or electricity is lost, will computer-based records be destroyed or unusable? Back-up copies or redundant files may be required.

**Notification**
This duty should be clearly defined and assigned. Failure to do so could cause a serious delay in alerting emergency-response agencies. There should be a protocol for making emergency notifications in specified situations. For example, priorities for emergency notification may include: (1) emergency services (police, fire, EMS); (2) school district central office; (3) designated evacuation center; (4) parents and/or media; (5) public utilities; and (6) others as defined by the school's specific disaster-response plans. The individual(s) charged with this responsibility must understand fully what is expected of them. They must have the information they need to inform emergency personnel, and they must know what information is confidential in specific circumstances.

**Evacuation/Shelter**
The individual charged with this duty will ensure that, if necessary, students are evacuated from the building or led to shelter inside the building. This may include checking restrooms, classrooms and common areas to ensure no students are left behind. In the event students are evacuated to another building, this individual will see that all students leave the building. Those

responsible for this duty also may be charged with deciding whether transportation is required to move students off-site and making the required notifications for this purpose.

### Scene Security

The staff member(s) responsible for this duty will ensure that the scene of an incident is secured from other students and staff. This is extremely important for areas that are considered to be crime scenes. Even in the event of an accident, however, the scene should be secured so that students and staff do not interfere with medical personnel who may be rendering assistance. There could be biohazards or explosive devices present in a given situation. Crime-scene integrity (evidence) may need to be preserved. Therefore, it is essential to maintain scene security until the location is cleaned up or released by law enforcement personnel.

### Direction of Emergency Services/Information Provider

This duty calls for the individual to wait for the arrival of emergency personnel and direct them to the actual location of the incident. This person may need to escort emergency personnel or give directions in the event of ongoing violent acts. This person should have keys to allow access to any part of the building. Custodians often can handle this duty.

### Trainer/Training Supervisor

In order for any plan to work, it is important that potential situations are practiced. The individual charged with this responsibility will ensure that members of the response team train for potential incidents. Training gives staff and faculty confidence to take appropriate actions during an actual emergency. A member of the school staff (such as the principal) may be designated as the training supervisor, but you should consider seeking external evaluation and assessment of your training exercises.

### Access Control

This duty is extremely important in ensuring that swift action can be taken. In most cases the school custodian has access to all parts of the building. However, if the custodian is not available, nobody else may know where certain things are located. Depending on the type of incident this person may also handle perimeter security (particularly for a crime scene) until authorities arrive. Several individuals in each building must know the location of the boiler room, main gas and water valves, main electric service panel, etc. Keys must be available to allow access to locations that are normally secured. Such areas also must be re-secured after an incident.

### Media Liaison

This duty will require the person to work closely with outside agencies and with the media. Depending on the nature of the emergency, this individual is likely to be determining the amount of information provided to the media and the public – and is likely to be under a great deal of stress. It is often assumed that the principal or other high-ranking school official should be the designated spokesperson, but this may not be the best approach. In a serious or large-scale emergency, for example, the principal's first priority is likely to be assuring the safety of students and staff. In other cases, the principal or other top official may be absent or incapacitated. Therefore, alternates must be prepared for this duty. Ideally, several persons in each school and at the district level should be trained to handle media-liaison duties, and a formal "chain of command" should be established for different types of emergency situations.

### Medical Care/First Aid

Several members of the faculty/staff should be trained in basic first aid. Some schools have full-time nurses available, but such services may be unavailable or insufficient in an emergency. Having more than one person trained will help to ensure that someone is present in the building in the event of injuries.

# *IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL HAZARDS*

Depending on the type of emergency your school may face, the building and the classrooms may contain a number of potential hazards. In some parts of Missouri, for example, earthquakes are a real possibility, while tornadoes, fires and armed intruders are possible everywhere. Taking the time to correct potentially dangerous situations in advance will help prevent injuries and could limit the dangers that may occur during a crisis. This section is intended to help you identify and mitigate potential hazards in classrooms, in other parts of the school, along possible evacuation routes, and in the neighborhood.

Especially in the event of an earthquake, objects such as these could cause serious injuries to students and staff:

- Unsecured bookshelves
- Unsecured wall shelves
- Freestanding cabinets
- Unsecured TV monitors and other equipment
- Rolling pianos
- Hanging plants
- Heavy objects stored in high locations

While these common hazards should be of greatest concern in earthquake-prone areas, they should be evaluated in every school. All schools, for example, are at-risk of being struck by a tornado and might experience a ceiling-collapse or the threat of heavy furniture and bookshelves toppling on occupants.

Here are a few questions to help your safety team evaluate other common hazards that are present in most school buildings:

- Are toxic, corrosive and flammable materials (including lab supplies and chemicals) stored properly and securely?
- Are warning signs posted in areas housing hazardous materials?
- Are appliances (water heaters, space heaters, power tools, etc.) securely anchored?
- Are fire extinguishers checked according to fire code requirements and secured against falling?
- Are office cabinets secured against falling; do drawers have adequate latches to prevent contents from spilling?
- Are "portable" buildings properly tied to foundations?
- Are automatic gas shut-off valves installed?
- Are light fixtures and ceiling fans adequately supported?

Windows, especially large-pane windows, are prevalent hazards in most schools. Broken glass, no matter the cause, can result in serious injuries. Shatter-resistant plastic film can hold window fragments together in case of an earthquake or severe storm. Plexiglas and similar products may be needed in some locations.

**Securing Evacuation Routes**

It is important for the safety team to consider various emergency scenarios and to identify hazards that may exist – or which could occur – along the designated evacuation routes. Although many of the hazards listed below are particularly relevant for earthquake situations, many of them apply for other emergency situations. Your local fire department or other officials may be able to assist your team in carrying out this assessment.

**Do hallways and/or doors contain glass panels?** Are these panels of safety (tempered) glass? Check local requirements concerning the use of safety glass along evacuation routes.

**Do lockers, bookshelves and other storage units line the hallways?** After an earthquake or storm, hallways may be cluttered with debris from ceilings, fallen light fixtures, broken glass, and toppled storage units. Students should be advised to anticipate these hazards.

**Is lighting dependent on electricity rather than sunlight?** If the lights fail in enclosed hallways or stairways, it will be much more difficult for students and staff to evacuate safely. Are emergency lights present and secured against falling.

**Does your school building have elevators?** Elevators are extremely vulnerable to damage from earthquakes. Post signs near the elevators prohibiting their use in the event of fire and earthquakes. Make sure you have plans and procedures for helping mobility-impaired students and staff evacuate safely from all parts of the facility.

**Do the exit routes pass under canopies?** In an earthquake or strong storm, exterior canopies, roof-overhangs, porches, and supporting columns may collapse. Escape routes could be blocked or become hazardous.

**Is the school building faced with parapets, balconies or cornices?** Roof tiles, parapets, balconies, cornices and other structural elements may fall during an earthquake. These structures may be weakened and not fall immediately.

**Are gas, sewer and power lines located near the evacuation routes or near outdoor assembly areas?** If the school must be evacuated, students and personnel should not go to areas where these hazards are located. There could be greater risk of harm to students and staff, and their presence could hinder repair crews.

**Off-site Hazards**
The safety team also needs to evaluate the neighborhood and the areas adjacent to school grounds for potential hazards. You cannot ignore businesses, factories and other structures near your schools. Although you may not be able to control what happens at these off-site locations, you must recognize possible hazards that may exist and how they could affect your response plans (including evacuation routes). Certain types of non-school facilities (a factory or a chemical-storage area, for example) could drastically cut the amount of time you have to activate your crisis plan.

Here are some of the off-site facilities that may create unique hazards for your school and which may dictate (or prevent) specific response measures:

- **Facilities containing toxic, chemically reactive, flammable and radioactive materials.** This includes manufacturers, distributors and users. It also includes gas stations because they have underground fuel-storage tanks and lines.
- **High-voltage power lines**
- **Transportation routes of vehicles carrying hazardous materials**
- **Underground gas and oil pipelines**
- **Underground utility vaults and aboveground transformers**
- **Multi-story buildings vulnerable to damage or collapse**
- **Water towers and storage tanks**
- **Storage facilities for agricultural chemicals**

Some of the hazards listed above are not readily apparent. Ask your fire department, city/county public works office, public utility officials and other authorities to assist your safety team in evaluating off-site threats.

**Window Coverings**
This is an important issue, yet it is so common that it may be overlooked. Classroom windows are often covered with students' work or other decorations. The way these materials are displayed could be a factor in your safety plan. For example, in the event of an armed intruder, window coverings could hamper law enforcement's response by obstructing views into the building. In addition, if your plan (or a specific incident) requires students to exit through windows, the decorations could become an obstacle. If windows are obscured, teachers may not be able to observe activities (such as a suspicious vehicle driving near the school) that could develop into a security problem. Personnel in each school should discuss this issue and decide what policies/practices they think are warranted.

# QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT YOUR SAFETY PLAN

Your planning team should be prepared to "think outside the box" as you develop a comprehensive safety and crisis-response plan. This may be especially important when you are identifying the various stakeholders in your community. If you work in a public school, for example, but there is a private school located nearby, representatives from both schools should be working together in the planning process.

Your safety plan must be based on reality, and it must be flexible. For example, are your emergency-response procedures built on the assumption that electric power and telephone communications remain intact? That's not realistic. If you do not have alternate resources available and ready (such as cell phones for key personnel), then your response plans could be seriously impaired.

The planning team must be prepared to continuously re-examine security-related policies and specific disaster-response measures. Circumstances change in your facilities and in the community. Key personnel may change in outside agencies. Emergency drills may reveal gaps and shortcomings in your safety plan that need to be corrected. Therefore, the process of safety planning must be viewed as a continuous process.

## *20 Key Questions*

Following are 20 questions to ask before, during and after your crisis-response plans have been developed. You will think of many more. The purpose of this short list is to highlight major areas the planning team must consider and to stress the importance of reassessing your plans on a regular basis.

1.      Who are the stakeholders in any crisis at our school?
2.      Have we included all the possible stakeholders in the planning process?
3.      What are the strengths and weaknesses in our school's security?
4.      Are there existing plans that can help us avoid re-inventing the wheel?
5.      What are the most likely crisis situations, both natural and manmade, that could affect our schools?
6.      Have we identified all the resources that will be needed and that are available in the event of an emergency?
7.      What is the capacity of the local hospital(s) in the event of a catastrophic incident?
8.      Where will injured students be transported and treated?
9.      How will the students be transported in the event of an evacuation?
10.     Have parents been adequately informed about their role in the event of a crisis?
11.     Have we "thought outside the box" in developing the crisis-response plan?
12.     Does everyone on the school faculty/staff understand their role in the response plan?
13.     Does the school have adequate storm-shelter facilities for all students and staff?
14.     How often is the response plan going to be practiced?
15.     Do you have firm commitments from local stakeholders (especially the emergency-response agencies) as to their roles in the response plan?
16.     Is the safety plan fluid so that it can be modified as need arises and without compromising its integrity/effectiveness?
17.     How often are each school's crisis kits and emergency kits going to be checked?

18.     How will your school and community deal with the after-effects of a disaster?
19.     Have you identified a crisis team to assist victims and their families?
20.     How can the response plan be improved?

# *THE ROLE OF PARENTS*

Parents, of course, are critical stakeholders in the educational process and in many other aspects of the life of each school. Their cooperation, understanding and support also are essential to the success of the school's safety policies. It is more important than ever, because of today's heightened concern over violence in schools, that parent leaders be actively involved in developing your safety plans. If parents and other community leaders are part of the planning process, they are much more likely to have confidence in school personnel and in the school's level of preparedness for potential emergencies.

School officials must recognize and anticipate the natural concerns that parents will have if there is an emergency situation at their school – and even if there is just a rumor of a crisis. Parents must be informed in advance about the school's general emergency-response policies, and it may be necessary to remind them about these policies regularly. All new students and parents need to be specifically briefed about emergency procedures. It is important to emphasize that your safety plans deal with the wide range of emergency situations that could arise at any school (fire, severe weather, bus accidents, etc.), not just violent incidents.

A clear lesson that has emerged from the recent violent incidents across the nation is that confusion, hysteria and "gridlock" are very real dangers during a school emergency. These conditions can arise quickly and seriously impede school officials, law enforcement, and rescue/recovery efforts. By clearly informing parents about the school's emergency procedures, you can do a great deal to prevent jammed telephone lines at the school and paralyzing traffic congestion around the school.

The letter on the next page is an example of how you can inform parents, community leaders and residents about the school's procedures and expectations during an emergency. Adapt this sample to meet the needs of your community and to reflect specific aspects of your crisis-response plans.

# *Sample Letter for Parents*

**Dear Parent/Guardian:**
We want you to be aware that Anytown Elementary School has made many preparations to deal effectively with emergency situations that could occur in or around the school while classes are in session. While we hope that a natural disaster or other serious incident never occurs, our goal is to be prepared for any potential emergency. At all times, our first priority is to protect all students and staff from harm.

In order for our emergency-response plans to be effective, we depend on the cooperation and assistance of many people, such as the police and the fire department. We also depend on you, as parents, to support our disaster-response efforts. Your cooperation is vital to helping us protect the safety and welfare of all children and school employees.
Therefore, we ask parents to observe the following procedures:

1. Do not telephone the school. We understand and respect your concern, but it is essential that the telephone system be available for emergency communications.

2. Tune your radio to _____ or _____ for emergency announcements and status reports. You also will receive instructions on where you should go and how/when you may be able to pick up your child.

3. Do not come to the school until instructed to do so. It may be necessary to keep the streets and parking lot clear for emergency vehicles. If evacuation is required, students may be transported to a location away from the school. You will be notified of this through the media bulletins.

4. Talk to your children and emphasize how important it is for them to follow instructions from their teachers and school officials during any emergency.

5. Carefully read all information you receive from the school. You may receive updates about our safety procedures from time to time.

We are proud that Anytown Elementary is a safe school, and we are doing everything possible to keep it that way. We appreciate your cooperation and support. If you have any questions about this letter or other aspects of our safety procedures, please contact _____.

Sincerely,
Superintendent or Principal

# *TYPES OF DRILLS & EXERCISES*

In order to ensure your safety plan is as effective as possible, it is important to conduct drills and exercises.  These activities allow students to practice their roles during an emergency, and they also enable you to identify possible weaknesses in your plans.  If you develop what appears to be an excellent plan but do not conduct the necessary drills and exercises, your plan may not be dependable and you could face liability when an actual emergency occurs.  In this section, we will discuss three types of drills and three types of exercises:

- Classroom Drill
- Evacuation Drill
- School Drill
- Tabletop Exercise
- Functional Exercise
- Full-scale Exercise

Prior to any drill or exercise, you should conduct a staff meeting to discuss the plan and review everybody's responsibilities.  This does not mean the staff must know when the drill or exercise will take place.

**Classroom Drill**
Classroom Drills are completed by individual classrooms, although all classes in the school may be participate simultaneously.  This might involve the teacher having all students practice taking cover or sheltering in place.  It is important that all teachers follow the procedures of the plan.  In addition faculty members should use consistent terms such as "take cover," "get down" and "hit the deck."  Whatever phrases are used should be consistent throughout the school.  Classroom drills also should be practiced in the school's common areas (library, gym, cafeteria, playground, offices, etc.).

**Evacuation Drills**
An evacuation drill covers the procedures used to evacuate a classroom, part of a building, or the entire building.  Evacuation is not appropriate for every type of emergency situation.  By conducting evacuation drills you will find the best back-up or alternate evacuation routes.  Do not depend only on a single evacuation route.  All staff need to realize that they may need to use alternate routes, depending on the circumstances that exist each emergency situation.

**School Drill**
The school drill is any school-wide drill that may or may not include evacuation.  Such drills may be useful in helping school officials and staff test specific procedures such as taking role, setting up a command post or first aid station, evacuating persons with special-needs, or conducting a "sweep" of the entire school.

**Tabletop Exercise**
A tabletop exercise involves only the adult staff members, and uses a scenario to help staff plan responses to specified incidents. This exercise can be used as a "walk-through" activity that allows school staff to practice for specific tasks. In many cases, you will want to include representatives from local emergency response agencies in the exercise.

**Functional Exercise**
A functional exercise tests one function of the response plan – first aid, communications, parent-child reunification, emergency transportation, etc. This is a useful technique for retesting an aspect of your plan that did not work smoothly in prior drills.

**Full-scale Exercise**
This is a comprehensive exercise that involves a school-wide drill and simulated problems such as injuries and structural damage. It may include outside "players" such as the police and fire department. Although the goal is to create a realistic situation and a demanding test of your response measures, it is **not recommended** that children be asked to "play dead." This is likely to create unnecessary anxiety or cause children to be more fearful of a possible crisis.

**Evaluating Drills and Exercises**
After drills and exercises, the planning team, school staff and other participants should conduct a formal debriefing session. The purpose of this discussion and critique is to evaluate the drill/exercise and learn from it. It should be honest and constructive. If problems occurred, they should not be ignored or minimized.

The debriefing should emphasize the positive aspects of the drill/exercise, and it should help reduce anxiety among staff. If you discover that something did not work properly, then train and test again. The time you invest now may save lives later.

# *WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY & HOW?*

As you develop your school's safety plan and review your crisis-response measures, it may be helpful to ask these simple questions:  Who?  What ?  When?  Where?  Why?  How?

In many instances these six basic questions can help you identify areas that have not been addressed in your plan.  To illustrate how useful these questions can be, assume that you are planning responses to an incident involving an armed intruder in a school.  Your list of questions might look something like this:

**WHO**
1.      WHO will verify that the report is accurate?
2.      WHO will notify authorities?
3.      WHO will notify the district office?
4.      WHO will advise the faculty?
5.      WHO has floor plans/blueprints for the facility, and where are they kept?
6.      WHO will meet the authorities and advise the officers responding?
7.      WHO will lead the officers to where the intruder was last seen?
8.      WHO will notify parents in the event of injuries?
9.      WHO is the intruder?  (Is the person recognized as a resident of the community, a student, or a former employee?)
10.     WHO will travel with injured students/faculty when they receive medical attention?
11.     WHO will ensure the safety of students with special needs?
12.     WHO will update the media?

**WHAT**
1.      WHAT will the first course of action be?
2.      WHAT will teachers do?  (Evacuate, Shelter in Place, etc.)
3.      WHAT emergency-response agencies will be notified?  This is especially important for areas without 911 capabilities.
4.      WHAT time of the day is it?  Are students in the cafeteria, gym, boarding buses, etc.?
5.      WHAT form of alert will be used to notify and implement Shelter in Place?
6.      WHAT exits will be used if evacuation is required?
7.      WHAT way do classrooms have to be secured from the inside?
8.      WHAT do staff/students do in open areas such as hallways, stairwells or offices?
9.      WHAT arrangements have been made for ensuring the safety of students/staff with special needs?

**WHEN**
1.      WHEN is the alarm activated for Shelter In Place?
2.      WHEN is the district office notified?
3.      WHEN are emergency services notified?
4.      WHEN are parents notified?
5.      WHEN will students be allowed to leave the building and/or campus?

**WHERE**
1.      WHERE is the intruder?
2.      WHERE are the students?  (Classrooms, gym, playground, parking lot, etc?)

3.    WHERE will the responding law enforcement officers be met?
4.    WHERE are exits located in relation to classrooms?
5.    WHERE will injured students/faculty be taken for medical care?
6.    WHERE will students outside the building evacuate?
7.    WHERE would you be able to set up an emergency command center with necessary equipment and work space?
8.    WHERE are emergency services going to be responding from?  This is a critical question because it requires that you anticipate *how* the emergency responders will get to your facility (what routes) and *how long* it may take for them to reach the scene.
9.    WHERE will classes resume if a facility is closed for an extended period because of damage or a lengthy criminal investigation?

**WHY**

WHY would an armed intruder enter the building? (This could be very important if the intruder is recognized, for example, as an angry student or a former employee who has made threats against the school or specific individuals.)

**HOW**

1.    HOW would an intruder gain access to the building?
2.    HOW will students secure their Shelter In Place locations?
3.    HOW will emergency services be notified?
4.    HOW is notification of missing students made?
5.    HOW will restrooms and other areas be checked to be sure students are in a secure area?
6.    HOW will the staff be notified to implement Shelter In Place or other response?
7.    HOW will traumatized students and staff be counseled following the incident?
8.    HOW many injured persons can local medical facilities handle?
9.    HOW will the news media be updated on the situation?

Generating questions such as these for different types of possible incidents (fire, tornado, bomb threat, etc.) can help you "think outside the box" during the planning stage; identify potential gaps in your response plans; involve all the members of your staff who need to be informed or trained; and tailor your plans to unique conditions that may exist in different locations/facilities.

# *SAMPLE CRISIS-RESPONSE PLANS*

Schools are subject to many types of crisis or disaster.  The severity of each depends on the nature of the event and how well you have planned your response.  School and community leaders must plan for the full range of potential emergencies, including:

| | |
|---|---|
| Tornado | Flood |
| Bus Accident | Child abduction |
| Fire | Chemical spill |
| Gas leak | Injured students (playground) |
| Fights | Armed intruder |
| Bomb threat | Explosion |
| Severe vandalism | Physical/sexual assault on students/staff |
| Ice/snow storms | Power failure |

In every case, the top priority will be to protect the safety of students and staff, and your response measures will be the same in many of these situations.  It is extremely important to realize that you are likely to be confronted with more than one emergency at the same time.  During a severe thunderstorm or tornado, for example, you might be faced with power failure, downed telephone lines, a collapsed ceiling in part of the school, multiple injuries, and blocked streets that prevent rapid response from emergency agencies.  Your planning team needs to consider such possibilities in order to help you develop the most effective response plans.

The following pages provide the outlines of sample response plans for five situations:

1. Tornado watch, tornado warning and tornado damage to the school
2. Bomb threat (by telephone, mail and e-mail)
3. Bomb threat leading to evacuation, with a sniper outside the building
4. Bus accident
5. Intruder in the building

As you review these samples and begin developing or refining your site-specific plans, you will quickly see how important teamwork, training, creative thinking and involving multiple stakeholders are in designing effective response plans for other situations.

## Tornado Watch

How does the school become aware? _____

What instructions are given to staff/students? _____

       Who gives instructions?

       Alternate(s)

Rules/routes posted where? _____


## Tornado Warning

Type of alarm _____

       Who sounds?

       Alternate(s)

What is the process to be followed:

In classrooms? _____

In the gymnasium? _____

In the lunchroom? _____

On the playground/sports field? _____

In restrooms? _____

Before/after school (buses)? _____

Other specific areas? _____

What local emergency agency helped plan safest area?_____

How is student count taken? _____

Who follows up if students are misplaced? _____

Is there a general check of common areas such as restrooms, hallways? _____

What is the process? _____

       Who checks?

       Alternate(s)

Expected student behavior _____

Who is in charge of emergency kits _____

       Alternate(s)

Where are they kept? _____

Who is in charge of crisis kits? _____

Where are they kept? _____

How are records preserved? _____

Which records (student emergency information, academic, etc.)?_ _____

       Who does it?

       Alternate(s)

How is internal communication managed? _____

       By whom?

       Alternate(s)

Have you checked into weather alert equipment? _____

Have you checked the possibility of radio frequency tuned to the police channel? _____

How is the "all clear" sounded? _____

       By whom?

       Alternate(s)

Who is responsible for evaluating the school's response? _____

Who is responsible for reviewing and revising the plan? _____

What is the process for debriefing students/staff/agencies/community? _____
How?
When?


# Tornado Damage


How are students prepared to listen to instructions? _____
Who gives instructions? _____
        Alternate(s)
How are instructions transmitted? _____
Does your plan account for possible power failure? _____
If evacuation is necessary:
To where? _____
Routes? _____
How? _____
Who counts students? _____
What is the plan for dealing with special-needs students/staff? _____
Who will be responsible for persons with special needs? _____
Who checks the building perimeter, including evacuation routes and destinations? _____
        Alternate(s)
What emergency services are notified and how? _____
Who notifies emergency services? _____
        Alternate(s)
What if telephones are not working? _____
What is the plan for response by emergency services? _____
What is the plan for emergency services to check on schools, in case a report was not made by
school officials? _____
Have you checked all possible communication resources (ham radio operators, first responders,
etc.)? _____
Who provides emergency first aid? _____
        Alternate(s)
How were they trained? _____
Who notifies the superintendent's office?  How? _____
        Alternate(s)
What is the plan for the central office to respond? _____
Who is the school's designated liaison to civil command? _____
        Alternate(s)
Where is the off-site staging area? _____
Do you have immediate access? _____
        How?
        Alternate sites?
If the site is not district property, do you have properly executed contracts for usage?
Who communicates with parents?  How?_____
        Alternate(s)
Who communicates with the media?  How? _____
        Alternate(s)
How/where do parents pick up their students? _____
Who documents the release of students?  How? _____

Alternate(s)
How are traffic and crowd control handled? _____
Have access routes been designated and cleared? _____
        By whom?
        Alternate(s)
Who do you call to coordinate trauma-related services? _____
        Who calls?
        Who serves as liaison?
        Alternate(s)
Who decides when school resumes? _____
Who works with the trauma-related response team to plan both short- and long-term recovery activities? _____
Who determines the need for additional state/local responders? _____
        Who calls?
        Who coordinates?
Who is responsible for debriefing the incident and critiquing the response? _____
        Who participates?
Who reviews and revises the crisis plan? _____

*(Return to mitigation activities)*


## Bomb Threat


**If threat is received by telephone:**
What does the person answering the phone say?  (Work with your local law enforcement in making this determination.) _____
Who does the person receiving the call report to? _____
Where is this procedure posted? _____
How is the decision to sound the alarm made?_____
Who makes the decision? _____
        Alternate(s)
Who sounds the alarm? _____
        Alternate(s)
**If threat is received by e-mail:**
Who does the person receiving the e-mail report to? _____
Where is this procedures posted? _____
How is the decision to sound the alarm made?_____
Who makes the decision? _____
        Alternate(s)
Who sounds the alarm? _____
        Alternate(s)


**If the threat is received by mail:**
Who does the person receiving the notice report to? _____
Where is this procedures posted? _____
How is the decision to sound the alarm made?_____
Who makes the decision? _____
        Alternate(s)

Who sounds the alarm? _____
     Alternate(s)

**When alarm is sounded:**
Rules/routes are posted where? _____
Who checks the perimeter of the building and grounds?_____
     Alternate(s)
What is the process to be followed:
In classrooms? _____
In the gymnasium? _____
In the lunchroom? _____
On the playground/sports field? _____
In restrooms? _____
Before/after school (buses)? _____
Other specific areas? _____
What local emergency agency helped plan safest area?_____
How is student count taken? _____
Who follows up if students are misplaced? _____
Is there a general check of common areas such as restrooms, hallways? _____
What is the process? _____
     Who checks?
     Alternate(s)
Expected student behavior _____
Who is in charge of emergency kits _____
     Alternate(s)
Where are they kept? _____
Who is in charge of crisis kits? _____
Where are they kept? _____
How are records preserved? _____

Which records (student emergency information, academic, etc.)?_____
     Who does it?
     Alternate(s)
How is internal communication managed? _____
     By whom?
     Alternate(s)

**In order to emphasize the importance of planning for multiple emergencies, let's now assume that evacuation is under way and there is a person with a gun outside the building:**

What is the process to be followed _____
What emergency services helped you plan this process? _____
How are students prepared to listen to instructions? _____
Who gives instructions? _____
     Alternate(s)
How will instructions be transmitted? _____

**If emergency removal of students is necessary** (based on plan devised with emergency service providers):

Where?  How? _____

Routes _____

Who counts students? _____

What is the plan for dealing with special-needs students/staff? _____

Who performs emergency first aid?_____

What emergency services are notified?  How? _____

Who notifies emergency services?_____

      Alternate(s)

What is the plan for emergency-services response?_____

What if telephones are not working?_____

Who notifies the superintendent's office? _____

      Alternate(s)

What is the plan for the central office to respond? _____

Who is the liaison to civil command? _____

      Alternate(s)

Where is the off-site staging area? _____

Do you have immediate access?_____

If it is not district property, do you have properly executed contracts for usage?_____

Who communicates with parents?  How? _____

      Alternate(s)

Who communicates with the media?  How? _____

      Alternate(s)

How/where do parents pick up their children? _____

Who documents the release of students? _____

      Alternate(s)

How are traffic and crowd control handled? _____

Have access routes been designated and cleared?_____

      By whom?

      Alternate(s)

Who do you call to coordinate trauma-related services? _____

      Who calls?

      Who serves as liaison?

      Alternate(s)

Who decides when school resumes? _____

Who works with the trauma-related response team to plan both short- and long-term recovery
activities?_____

Who determines the need for additional state/local responders?_____

      Who calls?

      Who coordinates?

Who is responsible for debriefing the incident and critiquing the response? _____

      Who participates?

Who reviews and revises the crisis plan? _____

*(Return to mitigation activities)*

## Bus Accident

What emergency-service providers helped plan this process? _____

How are drivers trained?_____
     By whom?
     How often?
How are emergency services notified?_____
     Who notifies?
     Alternate(s)
What is the plan for emergency services to respond? _____
Who checks on students? _____
Process to be followed _____
Expected student behavior _____
How are students prepared to listen to instructions? _____
     Who gives instructions?
     Alternate(s)
Who administers emergency first aid?_____
If evacuation is necessary, who decides? _____
What is the process for evacuation? _____
Expected student behavior _____
Who counts students? _____
     Alternate(s)
What is the plan for dealing with special-needs students? _____
Who notifies the superintendent's office?   How? _____
What is the plan for the central office to respond? _____
Who notifies to principal's office?  How? _____
What is the plan for principal (or designee) to _____
Who makes the decision for students to be transported to the hospital? _____
Who is the liaison to civil command? _____
     Alternate(s)
Where is the off-site staging area (if needed)? _____
Do you have immediate access? _____
If not district property, do you have properly executed contracts for usage? _____
Who communicates with parents?  How? _____
     Alternate(s)
Who communicates with the media?  How? _____
     Alternate(s)
How/where do parents pick up their children? _____
Who documents the release of students?  How? _____
     Alternate(s)
Who do you call to coordinate trauma-related services? _____
     Who calls?
     Who coordinates?
     Alternate(s)_____
Who decides when school resumes? _____
Who works with the trauma-related response team to plan both short- and long-term recovery
activities? _____
Who determines the need for additional state/local responders? _____
Who is responsible for debriefing the incident and critiquing the response? _____
     Who participates?
Who reviews and revises the crisis plan? _____

# Intruder in the Building

What emergency-service provider helped you plan this process? _____

How is the decision to sound the alarm made? _____

Who makes the decision? _____

Type of alarm _____

**What is the process to be followed:**

In the classrooms?_____

In the gymnasium? _____

In the lunchroom? _____

On the playground/sports fields? _____

In restrooms?_____

Before/after school (buses)?_____

Other specific areas? _____

What is the process for special-needs students/staff? _____

Who will be responsible for students with special needs? _____

      Alternate(s)

How is access to safe areas controlled?_____

How is student count taken?_____

How is notification of missing students made? _____

How is follow-up of missing students conducted?_____

      By whom?

      Alternate(s)

Who conducts general check of common areas?_____

      Alternate(s)

Expected student behavior _____

Who is in charge of emergency kits and crisis kits? _____

      Alternate(s)

Where are they kept? _____

How is internal communication managed?_____

      By whom?

      Alternate(s)

Who decides to notify emergency services? _____

What emergency services are notified?  How?_____

What if normal telephones are not working or available? _____

What is the plan for emergency service response? _____

Who notifies the superintendent's office?_____

      Alternate(s)

What is the central office response? _____

How is the "all clear" sounded? _____

      By whom?

      Alternate(s)

**Injuries Caused by Intruder(s)**

How are students prepared to listen to instructions? _____

Who gives instructions? _____

How will instructions be transmitted? _____

What emergency services are notified?  How? _____

What is the plan for emergency-service response? _____

Who is the liaison to civil command? _____

       Alternate(s)

Who provides emergency first aid? _____

Where is the off-site staging area? _____

Do you have immediate access? _____

Who communicates with parents?  How? _____

       Alternate(s)

Who communicates with the media?  How? _____

       Alternate(s)

How/where do parents pick up their children? _____

Who documents the release of students? _____

How are traffic and crowd control handled? _____

Have access routes been designated and cleared? _____

       By whom?

       Alternate(s)

Who do you call to coordinate trauma-related services? _____

       Who calls?

       Who coordinates?

       Alternate(s)

Who decides when school resumes? _____

Who works with the trauma-related response team to plan both short- and long-term recovery activities? _____

Who determines the need for additional state/local responders? _____

Who is responsible for debriefing the incident and critiquing the response? _____

       Who participates?

Who reviews and revises the crisis plan? _____

*(Return to mitigation activities)*

# *DEALING WITH THE TRAUMATIC AFTERMATH*

In any thorough response plan, there must be provisions for the aftermath and assisting persons who were affected by the crisis. This may include students, parents, teachers and school officials, and emergency personnel. Even those who are not directly affected or injured by a crisis situation may suffer post-traumatic stress, fear, and emotional distress. A crisis such as a tornado, fire or shooting incident is difficult enough for adults to cope with; it can be even tougher for children. Dealing with this reality is an important aspect of long-term recovery efforts.

How will these needs be met? How do you ensure that only the most appropriate personnel interact with those needing assistance? These are questions that must be answered before a crisis occurs.

Long after the physical wounds have healed and damage to the school is repaired, members of the school community may be still be dealing with the crisis. Post-traumatic stress disorder can manifest itself through flashbacks, nightmares, angry outbursts, and sleep or concentration problems.

Following a traumatic or destructive event, some students and personnel may have difficulty readjusting to the environment. Even if there has been no obvious damage to a room or to the building, students and faculty may still be deeply affected by events that occurred during an emergency. Therefore, school officials need to carefully consider the process of resuming normal operations and how students and staff are reintroduced to school facilities.

Identify those groups or individuals who have training/experience in working with survivors of a crisis. Keep in mind that resources used for dealing with mental illness may not be the best choice for dealing with students and school personnel. Consider all the resources that may be available in your community: school counselors, clergy, and health and mental health professionals. Also, talk with officials from other schools that have lived through crisis situations.

# WEATHER ALERTS

At some point, virtually every school is likely to experience severe weather. Regardless of the type (tornado, thunderstorm, snow, ice, flash flood), it is important for school officials to receive alerts and warnings as soon as possible. A common way to receive such information is through radio or TV broadcasts. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, however, it can take as much as 10 minutes from the time a warning is issued by the National Weather Service until the bulletin is broadcast. In addition, radio and TV may be unreliable – particularly if you lose power or cable service during bad weather.

As part of your crisis-response efforts, consider obtaining a NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) with a "tone alert" feature. This is considered the fastest, most accurate and reliable means of receiving critical weather information. NWR is operated directly from National Weather Service offices, with broadcasts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When the National Weather Service issues a weather warning, the "tone alert" is instantly sounded, followed by warning information. Make sure you have both electric and battery power for the NWR.

Remember that emergency sirens are intended to warn people who are outside. If your school depends on the siren as the main form of notification, you may be setting yourself up for problems.

The NWR also can give school administrators valuable alerts and lead-time concerning the onset of snow, ice or other inclement weather. This can be extremely important in making school-closing decisions. If your school has or obtains a NOAA Weather Radio, locate it at or near the main office (near the decision-maker) and near the school's PA system. Be certain that persons monitoring the radio understand what actions they are should take, or what decisions they are authorized to make, based on the information they receive.

A few extra minutes of lead time in responding to or anticipating severe weather can make a big difference to the security of your students and staff.

# *SHELTERING IN PLACE*

Sheltering in Place ("SIP") is the purposeful act of keeping students and staff inside the building in a predetermined area. In some instances, Sheltering in Place is the best defense against hazardous situations – a release of toxic chemicals, or a dangerous situation unfolding inside or outside of the school building, for example. In many cases, the regular classroom will be the designated SIP location for most students. Your plans, however, also must provide for moving students from other locations (playground, gym, cafeteria, parking lot, etc.) into the secure SIP areas.

**What are the major steps of Sheltering in Place?**
1. Move students and staff into designated locations inside the facility. Teachers and other designated staff should take "SIP kit" with them.
2. Notify law enforcement (if necessary), the district office, and other emergency services.
3. Close all windows and doors.
4. Seal the room from outside air infiltration, especially in case of fumes or possible toxic materials.
5. Turn on radio/TV for further information or instructions. (In the event of an intruder, remain quiet, and do not draw attention to your location. This may involve keeping TVs and radios off or at low volume.)
6. Lock entrances to the SIP location. (In the event of fumes, this will prevent the door from being opened accidentally. In case of an intruder, it can keep the person out.)
7. Keep away from windows.

**Key reminders during SIP activation:**
1. Monitor the situation with all communication devices available to you.
2. Remain calm and in charge of your students.
3. Engage students and staff in pre-planned activities, if possible. In the event of an armed intruder, silence is important. Noise may draw the intruder to the location.
4. Monitor students for signs of anxiety and stress.
5. Stay in the SIP room until the all-clear is given.

**Post-SIP procedures:**
1. Notify the district office with updated information.
2. Prepare communications for parents.
3. Plan for debriefing time with staff.
4. Restock SIP kits as needed.
5. Review unsealed areas for maintenance damage.

**General reminders and suggestions concerning Sheltering in Place:**
1. Inform parents in advance about the school's general plans and procedures for using Shelter in Place.
2. Instruct staff to take gradebooks/rosters for attendance (if the SIP sites are not their regular classrooms).
3. Bring critical student medications to the SIP location.
4. Bring the first aid kit.
5. Bring 2 way radio, cell phone and/or hard phone, if possible.
6. Prior to SIP event, work out details for restroom needs.

7.     On exterior doors, post an explanation of the SIP process and expectations for people who will try to enter the facility.
8.     Determine if someone will be posted in the office and what their responsibilities will be during the SIP event.
9.     Generally, SIP events last less than three hours.

**Useful items for an emergency "SIP kit":**
- Radio and batteries
- Flashlight and batteries
- Towels
- Supplies to seal doors, windows and vents
- Water, cups and snacks
- List of activities for students and staff
- Paper and pens
- Roster of all persons assigned to the location (teacher's grade book)

In this discussion, we have referred several times to incidents involving toxic fumes or a chemical spill. Although such events are relatively rare, they can occur almost anywhere. Incidents of this type also illustrate the kind of situation in which students and staff may have very little time to react and protect themselves. They also illustrate the kinds of events in which evacuation may be the worst course of action. These are the kinds of situations in which a carefully planned Shelter in Place procedure is vital. And because reaction time may be extremely limited, it is important for students and staff to practice the SIP procedure.

One more reminder: Sheltering in Place may be implemented quickly for students who are already in their classrooms. Students and staff, however, may be in other places – loading or unloading buses, on the playground, passing between classes, eating lunch, etc. Your SIP plan must take these contingencies into account.

# *SCHOOL-EVACUATION NOTICE*
## *(Sample)*

**Date released:**

**Time released:**

**Released By:**


Because of the incident at (School Name Here), the students, faculty and staff have been evacuated to an alternate location as a preliminary measure.

(School Name Here) has been relocated to (New Location Name Here).

*(Repeat this information for as many schools as may be involved.)*


Parents are instructed to pick up their children at the alternate location. Do not attempt to pick up children at their regular school. Please meet your child at the alternate location. All other schools and school facilities are unaffected. Parents and citizens are urged not to interfere in the operation of those schools by calling on the telephone or by personal visits. Your cooperation in this matter is expected and appreciated.

*(Repeat entire message once, then follow with any other official messages.)*

# *STATE-LEVEL RESPONSE & RESOURCES*

In most cases, it is expected that local school officials and other community leaders will be capable of dealing with the demands of a crisis-response and recovery phase.  By their nature, emergencies demand immediate action and local response, and there may not be time for outside resources to be provided in a timely manner.  In the case of natural disasters, however, or in a protracted emergency situation, the demands of the situation my exceed the capabilities of local authorities.   In these situations, state agencies and officials stand ready to offer assistance, expertise, manpower and other resources to support school and civic leaders.  (One recent example of this would be the Flood of 1993, when some communities lost school facilities and outside agencies assisted with response and recovery.)

The State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) already monitors a telephone line (573-751-2748) that can be a convenient point-of-contact for local school officials.  SEMA officials can serve as a primary point of contact and referral in working with various state agencies.

**Ways the State of Missouri can help:**
- In a catastrophic or large-scale incident, the Department of Public Safety can call upon state-level law enforcement resources (Highway Patrol, Water Patrol, State Fire Marshall, etc.).

- The Department of Natural Resources can assist school and community leaders with clean-up and long-term issues associated with toxic or hazardous materials.

- The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education can assist schools with long-term recovery efforts by assessing facility needs, contacting other school districts for supplies and equipment, identifying other school officials with experience in crisis-response, etc.  DESE also can serve as a link to other organizations that have expertise in crisis response (National Association of Secondary School Principals, the statewide School Counselors Association, etc.).

- The Department of Health is likely to be involved in any case involving a disease outbreak or an incident that causes multiple fatalities.

- After many traumatic events, there are survivors who need assistance dealing with what they experienced.  This need by survivors may include just getting their day-to-day life together.  For some it may be receiving assistance in planning their child's funeral or notifying family members.  The Missouri Department of Public Safety has worked with groups who provide such services; therefore this agency may be the likely choice to handle this need.   The Department of Mental Health can also assist by providing expertise and identifying potential local resources to assist with trauma-response and counseling.

# *ACKNOWLEDGMENTS*

# Appendix

# *Publications and Resources*

There are publications and videos available through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These items may be ordered directly from FEMA (800-480-2520) or by calling the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency (573-526-9100). These resources include:

**Publications**
- *Guidebook for Developing a School Earthquake Safety Program*
- *How to Help Children After a Disaster: A Guidebook for Teachers*
- *School Intervention Following a Critical Incident*
- *Earthquake Preparedness Information for People with Disabilities*

**Videotapes**
- Reducing Nonstructural Earthquake Damage – A Practical Guide for Schools
- Children & Trauma – the School's Response
- Earthquake Response Planning & Schools

**Training**
The State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) offers a training program called "Community Emergency Response Team" (CERT). The CERT Course covers topics such as disaster preparedness, disaster fire suppression, disaster medical operations, light search-and-rescue operations, disaster psychology, and team organization. For information on how to attend this training, contact SEMA at 573-526-9146.

**Creating a Safe School Climate**
The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recently published (August 1999) a brief report entitled *Creating a Safe School Climate*. It includes recommendations and ideas developed by a panel of Missouri high school principals and DESE personnel. The report includes an up-to-date list of safety- and planning-related resources for local leaders and numerous information sources available on the Internet. (Excerpt included in this Appendix. Contact DESE (573-751-4212) to obtain a printed copy of the full report.)

Creating A Safe School Climate

Schools are the safest place in the nation but school administrators are challenged to maintain a safe school environment among threats and/or acts of violence while trying to serve as the instructional leader and do those things historically associated with the principal's duties. The knowledge and experience of school administrators in the state have been compiled to assist schools to prepare for and deal with a crisis situation. Although each school will have unique situations with which to deal, it is felt that a somewhat common approach to dealing with threats across the districts in the state is beneficial.

*At the beginning of the school year publicize the district's plan to deal with threats or school violence. . .*
- all instructional time will be made up
- all perpetrators will be punished
- charges will be filed for prosecution
- costs of operations associated with crisis will be assessed to parents as allowed by law

*Build a climate where kids don't think they have to strike out at other kids. . .*
- provide character education for students to learn responsibility for their actions
- establish an advisement system at the secondary level to build a relationship of trust between students and staff
- promote a philosophical change from elementary to high school level to teach kids it is not tattling to tell adults about things seen or heard
- invite new students to lunch to get to know the school staff and each other
- use summers to train and work with peer mediators to deal with ongoing needs not just crises
- provide more time for counselors to counsel
- provide parenting classes at time of birth of child and when a skid gets into trouble
- utilize resource officers to develop relationships with freshmen and sophomores through presentation of written curriculum covering search and seizure, arrests, etc.
- review crisis plan with staff and students at the beginning of the school year
- conduct background checks on visitors who attend school functions se a "social release form" for people who come to school functions who are not students
- secure cooperation of Mental Health agencies for assessment and treatment of very troubled youth and a signed release for their return to school

*Develop a crisis plan. . .*
- meet with emergency preparedness group regarding what to do in case of a crisis
- determine if cellular phones, walkie talkies, or other means of communication will be used
- detail the method of keeping teachers and other staff members informed during a crisis
- consult with telephone company regarding procedures to follow when a bomb threat is received (e.g., leave phone off hook if on a PBX system)

- have Caller I.D. installed on all phones
- use the same telephone system in all schools of the district to make tracing calls easier
- ascertain the need to limit entry and exit
- determine safe places to house students
- choose a place for parents to meet their children
- designate a location for the media to assemble
- plan to stay in classrooms if a specific location is not identified for a bomb
- assign staff spaces to search and secure
- resource officer to take lead with law enforcement personnel
- utilize PTA officers to make parent contacts and reduce anxiety, etc.

*Prepare staff to deal with a crisis situation. . .*
- train staff on all crises plans prior to the start of school
- present forms and share expectations for collection of information that law enforcement will need if threats received (e.g., who reported the threat, who made the threat, where it was overheard, who if to receive the report, and follow-up action)
- have detailed plan on what information is to be recorded when anyone gets a "lead" on someone, to whom it is reported, and how it will be followed-up
- discuss appropriate use of 800 number
- train all staff to be aware of items in classrooms, halls, and multi-purpose areas and eliminate unnecessary items in building for easier detection of foreign objects in a setting
- assign one administrator to work with special education students and staff
- share expectations with substitutes and train them in handling crises

*Handling the media. . .*
- visit with media regularly to establish a relationship prior to a crisis
- inform media what procedure will be followed should a crisis occur
- designate a media contact person, preferably not the principal; have a back-up person identified
- have a media release prepared for distribution should a crisis occur

*Provide support system for principals. . .*
- utilize the Principals Emergency Response Team (PERT)
- allow debriefing time with counseling or whatever is needed
- train new principals on how to handle a crisis

Creating a safe school climate consists of three phases – prevention, intervention, and response. Emphasis on prevention should reduce the necessity of intervention and response.

# chapter three
# SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT
## Creating a Climate Conducive to Teaching and Learning

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The high school community, which cannot be value-neutral, will advocate and model a set of core values essential in a democratic and civil society.

2. Experiences in high school will acknowledge multiple talents and ways of learning to help students achieve the meaningful success that leads to further achievement.

3. Every high school student will have a Personal Adult Advocate to help him or her personalize the educational experience.

4. The school will accord meaningful roles in the decision-making process to students, parents, and members of the staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership.

5. In order to maintain a positive environment, each high school will ensure that any student who brings a weapon into a high school, sells illegal drugs in the school, or behaves violently in the school will immediately forfeit the right to attend that particular school.

6. Agreements that school systems negotiate with teachers, principals, and other personnel will be accompanied by a Student Impact Statement to help warrant that contracts and other agreements consider the best interests of students.

7. Every school system will ensure that facilities used by its high schools are clean, attractive, safe, and well equipped.

# What Teachers & Administrators Must Know
# About the Safe Schools Act

**What your school board must do:**

The Safe Schools Act (SSA) requires your board to clearly establish a written discipline policy. The policy must:

1) State the district's position on corporal punishment and the procedures used
2) Define weapon
3) Define "acts of school violence"
4) Set out reporting and recording requirements by administrators and staff

"Act of school violence" or "violent behavior" means the exertion of physical force by a student with the intent to do serious physical injury to another person while on school property, school bus or school activity.

**Instruction all school employees must receive:**

The SSA requires teachers and other school employees to receive annual instruction related to the specific contents of the discipline policy, with emphasis on:

1) Your school's approved methods of dealing with school violence
2) Disciplining disabled students
3) The necessity of keeping students' records confidential

**Records and information that must be available to you:**

School administrators must report the following information to teachers and other school employees with a "need to know":

1) Acts of violence committed by students on school property or at school activities
2) Any portion of a student's IEP related to violent behavior
3) If a petition has been filed in juvenile court against a student alleging the student committed a specific felony or felonies. Juvenile authorities are required to notify schools within 5 days if charges have been filed

"Need to know" is defined as school personnel who are directly responsible for the student's education or who otherwise interact with the student on a professional basis while acting within the scope of their assigned duties.

School administrators must also:

1) Report certain felonies committed on school property to local law enforcement
2) Compile and maintain records of any serious violation of the district's discipline policy
3) Make those records available to teachers who need to know

**What you must report to your principal:**

If you "become aware of" anyone committing any of the following acts while on school property, you must immediately report such act to your principal.

1) First, second, or third degree assault
2) Sexual or deviate sexual assault

You must also report:

1) Possession of a weapon by a student
2) Possession of drugs by a student

Superintendents may execute a written agreement as to the procedure for reporting third degree assaults with the appropriate local law enforcement agency.

You cannot be held civilly liable for reporting such incidents in good faith. However, you may be held liable if you deliberately neglect or refuse to report what you know.

**Students' records must be kept confidential:**

What you learn about a student through his or her records must be kept in the strictest confidence! Under no circumstances should a student's "personally identifiable records" be divulged to anyone outside of school without parental permission or the permission of students who are 18 and older unless those records are subpoenaed by the proper authorities.

Anyone who violates the student confidentiality provision of SSA is guilty of a class B misdemeanor (imprisonment exceeds 30 days but is less than 6 month).

**Key sections of the SSA:**

160.261, RSMo; 167.020, RSMo; 167.023, RSMo; 167.115, RSMo; 167.117, RSMo; 167.161, RSMo; 167.171, RSMo. These laws are available at *www.dese.state.mo.us/schoollaw/index.html*. Click on "School Laws and Legislation" for an index of laws related to public schools. You can also retrieve HB 1301 and 1298, the original Safe Schools Act, at this location.

*Source:* Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, School Laws and Legislation Section, 1999.

# NASSP Student/Parent/Principal

## Contract for Eliminating Guns and Weapons from Schools

### We, the undersigned, agree to the following commitments;

## Principal

- I will ensure that students have an anonymous way to report to an adult any guns or other weapons they see on campus.
- I will promote conflict resolution instruction for all students as part of the curriculum.
- I will communicate the school's policies on guns and weapons to all participants in the school community and focus upon the responsibilities we all have.
- I will use the school's student leadership groups and student meetings to obtain ideas to develop a safe school environment.
- I will report all guns and other weapons violations to law enforcement officials, according to established procedures.

_____

Principal Signature

## Parent/Guardian

- I will teach, including by personal example, my teenagers about the dangers and consequence of guns and weapons use, and I will keep any guns and all weapons I own under lock and away from my children.
- I will support the school's policies to eliminate guns and weapons and work with the school in developing programs to prevent violence.
- I will carry out my responsibility to teach my children how to settle arguments without resorting to violence, to encourage him/her to use those ideas when necessary, and to follow school guidelines for reporting guns and weapons they see to an appropriate adult.

_____

Parent/Guardian Signature

## Student

- I agree not to bring a gun or any weapon to school or to any school event.
- I will tell my peers to seek adult assistance when conflict situations begin to get out of control
- I will not carry another person's gun or weapon.
- If I see a gun or other weapon on campus or at a school event, I will alert an adult about its existence.
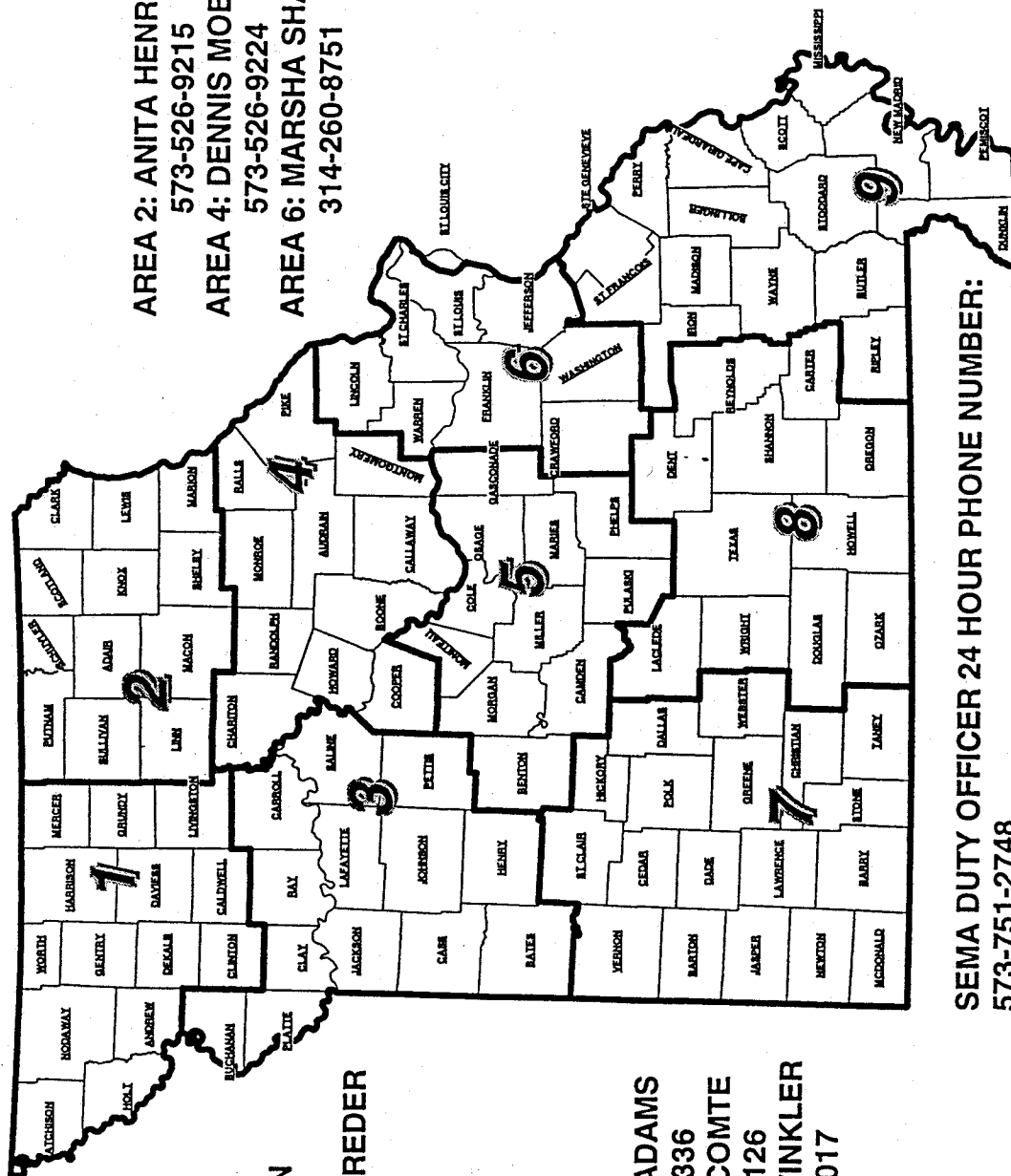
_____

Student Signature

## SIGNED:

_____

Student

_____

Parent

_____

Principal

Developed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals

VIII

# SEMA AREA COORDINATOR MAP

AREA 2: ANITA HENRY
573-526-9215
AREA 4: DENNIS MOBRICE
573-526-9224
AREA 6: MARSHA SHANNON-GUYOT
314-260-8751

AREA 1: A. J. LEHMEN
573-526-9127
AREA 3: BONNIE MARTIN
816-889-3221
AREA 5: BRENDA HEIDBREDER
573-526-9125

AREA 7: CANDY ADAMS
417-895-6336
AREA 8: TOM LECOMTE
573-526-9126
AREA 9: MARK WINKLER
573-651-2017

SEMA DUTY OFFICER 24 HOUR PHONE NUMBER:
573-751-2748

# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
## TO
## COMMUNITY CRISIS RESPONSE

When a sudden, seemingly arbitrary act wreaks havoc on a community – be it town or neighborhood, school or business – there is both physical destruction and emotional impairment. The physical destruction requires immediate action by people trained in emergency response work – law enforcement, emergency medical personnel, emergency management technicians, etc. In the same vein, the emotional trauma suffered by individuals and by the community-at-large requires a specific response from trained personnel. The latter is "Community Crisis Response" – a prescribed method of assisting victims of violence and other stark misfortunes, which is supported by clinical and empirical research to minimize the trauma of all the victims and ultimately, over time, to expedite recovery.

Simply "calling in the counselors" is not an effective response to the complexities of a community in crisis. There are many issues that must be examined and responded to in the aftermath of such tragedies as the Columbine school violence. For example, consider the fact that, in many such instances, the very caregivers (school counselors) called upon to respond are probably themselves traumatized and have no business, at that moment, trying to respond to others who are similarly traumatized. This would result in incomplete or inadequate interventions to students as well as damaging to these dedicated professionals.

It would be incorrect to assume that local mental health professionals and agencies (psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors and social workers) have the necessary training to effectively address trauma issues. Psychiatrists are trained to deal with the biological aspects of mental illness, emotional disorders, and drug and alcohol abuse. Psychologists are taught to deal with the cognitive aspects of mental illnesses and emotional disorders, as are counselors and social workers. Again, few if any of these professionals have training in serving trauma victims of violence, who are not mentally impaired, but are "in crisis." Treating a person who is acutely grieving as someone with depression cannot only retard the healing process, but can actually do more harm than good.

Victim services as part of a trained Crisis Response Team address a wide scope of issues related to the violent trauma: emotional terror, acute anxiety, withdrawal, regression, impact on daily functioning, vicarious traumatization of caregivers, community impairment, short and long range planning, etc.

A Crisis Response Team should have representation from a broad spectrum of disciplines to provide the Crisis Response Team itself with valuable insights to various issues: law enforcement, clergy, mental health, education, healthcare, courts, children services, elderly services, and so on.

In the past few years, we have experienced throughout the nation a rash of violent acts perpetrated on students and schools. These crimes and their aftermath left a wake of trauma; communities throughout the United States realized their vulnerability to sudden, random

violence. While it is more comfortable to retreat in denial after such a tragedy by pretending that it is an isolated phenomenon, the pervasiveness of criminal behavior over the last fifteen years makes it incumbent that communities prepare and plan for how they will respond if such catastrophes happen to them.

Additional information on crisis response teams and their work can be obtained from:

National Organization for Victim Assistance
1757 Park Road, N.W.
Washington, D.C.  20010

*(Portions of this appendix have been summarized from "The Need for Public Response to Communities Facing Crisis" published by the National Organization for Victim Assistance.)*